

# BNSF Railway Company – Former Tie Treating Plant, Somers, Montana

February 2016



A shoreline stabilization and restoration project is being implemented on a portion of the BNSF-owned shoreline of Flathead Lake to address erosion for protection of remedial measures.

## Overview of the Site and Shoreline Stabilization Project

The BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) Somers Former Tie Treating Plant (Somers Site) encompasses approximately 80 acres near Flathead Lake, northeast of the town of Somers, Montana. The Somers Site was operated as a railroad tie and wood treatment facility by BNSF and its predecessors between 1901 and 1986. During historical operations, wastewater was directed to an area adjacent to Flathead Lake, referred to as the "swamp pond," close to Flathead Lake. This area was remediated by BNSF under EPA Orders. However, prompt action is warranted to address on-going erosion along the northern shore of Flathead Lake for continued protection of the remedy.

#### CLEAN UP AND PROTECTION MEASURES

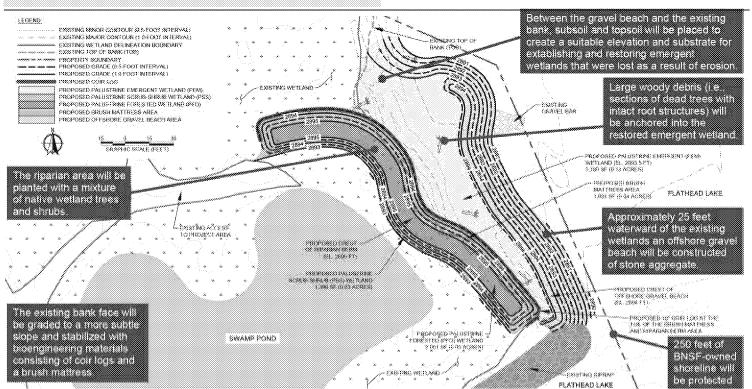
Remedy: Response actions were taken to cleanup and restore the swamp pond and surrounding marsh.

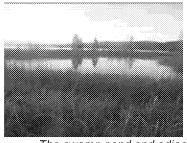
- ✓ Impacted surface water, sediments, and underlying soils were removed from the swamp pond and surrounding areas to a specified depth and replaced with compacted, borrow material as part of measures mandated by the EPA.
- ✓ BNSF subsequently restored the swamp pond and acquired additional land on the north shore of Flathead Lake to preserve as a wetland reserve easement.

Shoreline Erosion: Over the past 30 years, unprotected shoreline of Flathead Lake has eroded.

- ✓ Since the initial remedy for the swamp pond was implemented, the BNSF-owned shoreline abutting non-BNSF property has retreated approximately 2 to 6 feet per year as a result of operations of the Séliš Ksanka Ql'ispé Dam. This is consistent with measured rates of erosion at other locations along the northern shore of Flathead Lake. The eroding area was not part of the 1985 erosion control measures.
- ✓ In total, the BNSF-owned shoreline has retreated up to 125 feet in some areas.
- ✓ On average, less than 15 feet currently separates the swamp pond from Flathead Lake.

## Plan view drawing of the stabilization & restoration project







The swamp pond and adjacent BNSF-owned shoreline

Current Site Challenges: There is concern that erosion on the North Shore of Flathead Lake will damage past remedial and restoration efforts at the Swamp Pond.

✓ Erosion is scouring the near-shore environment, and decreasing the extent of the emergent wetland that surrounds the swamp pond. Anticipated Benefits: The project will reduce erosion and improve habitat conditions at the site.

- ✓ The project is anticipated to be stable and resistant to erosion. It will absorb and reduce impinging wave energy and increase the tensile strength of soils.
- ✓ In combination, the offshore gravel beach, restored emergent wetland, large woody debris, and riparian buffer will provide beneficial habitat complexity for native wildlife, including waterfowl and fish
- ✓ An adaptive management process will be implemented to evaluate post-construction conditions and address unforeseen conditions that may develop.
- √ 1,000 cubic yards of aggregate /soil will be imported for the project along with native plant cuttings. Construction equipment will include an excavator, dozer and loader. The project is expected to last three weeks.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 - Montana Office 10 W. 15th St., Suite 3200

Helena, MT 59626 Attn: Roger Hoogerheide

Return Service Requested

# **Upcoming Community Meeting**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and BNSF Railway Company will discuss the shoreline stabilization and restoration project on the BNSF-owned shoreline of Flathead Lake during an upcoming County Commissioners meeting.

#### Where:

Flathead County Commissioners 800 South Main Room 302 Kalispell, MT 59901

#### When:

February 27, 2018 10:30 am

## **Information Repositories**

EPA Superfund Records Center; 10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street; Suite-3200; Helena, MT 1-866-457-2690 (toll Free) Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### More Information

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# BNSF Railway Company

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